



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

schichte der Philosophie, says: "Parmenidēs' ideas of the construction of the Universe are either incorrectly handed down, or are unintelligible from their peculiarity of expression. They did not prevent him from having, for his time, important astronomical information." This is clear from lines 143-4, which evidently refer to the moon.

20. This agrees somewhat with Hesiod's statement that Eros (Love) was the child of Chaos and Earth. (*Theogony*, 121.) Compare also note 14, and Preller's *Griechische Mythologie*, Vol. I., p. 393. We know also from Aristotle that Parmenidēs made Love one of the prime movers. The other of the two primal causes (*αἰτιαί*), mentioned by Aristotle, was doubtless Hate, as indeed we are told by Cicero. This, again, brings us very close to the doctrine of Empedoklēs, whose two great physical principles are Friendship (*φιλότης*) and Strife (*νεῖκος*), or, as we should say in modern times, attraction and repulsion.

21. Theophrastos's note on this passage is: "Since there are two elements, the cognition is according to the one that prevails; for, according as the hot or the cold has the upper hand, the thought will differ."

22. The following Latin version of a passage of Parmenidēs, probably connected with this, but no longer extant, occurs in Cœlius Aurelianus *De Morb. Chron.* IV. 9:

"Femina virque simul veneris quum semina miscent
Venis, informans diverso ex sanguine virtus,
Temperiem servans, bene condita corpora fingit;
At si virtutes permixto semine pugnent
Nec faciant unam, permixto in corpore diræ
Nascentem gemino vexabunt semine sexum."

MEDITATIONS

CONCERNING THE FIRST PHILOSOPHY,

In which are clearly proved the Existence of God, and the real distinction between the Soul and Body of Man.

Translated from the French of Descartes, by WM. R. WALKER.

FIRST MEDITATION.

ON THE THINGS WHICH MAY BE CALLED IN QUESTION.

It is not now that I have discovered that, from my earliest years, I have received many false opinions as true, and that what I have since built on foundations so insecure can be but very doubtful and uncertain; and from that time I have

judged it well that I should seriously undertake, once in my life, to rid myself of all the opinions I have hitherto received into my belief, and to begin anew from the foundations if I would establish anything firm and constant in the sciences. But, this undertaking appearing to me to be very great, I waited until I should attain an age so mature that I could not hope for another after it in which I should be more fit to carry out the undertaking; which has made me defer so long that I should henceforth believe myself blameworthy if I longer employed in deliberation the time which remains to me for action. Having therefore, this day, in accordance with this design, freed my mind from all manner of cares, and happily feeling myself agitated by no passion, and having gained for myself an assured repose in a peaceful solitude, I shall apply myself seriously and freely to destroy generally all my old opinions. But, for this purpose, it will be unnecessary for me to show that they are all false, a process of which perhaps I might never see the end; but since reason already persuades me that I ought not less carefully to guard against giving credence to things which are not entirely certain and indubitable than to those which manifestly appear to me to be false, it will be sufficient for me, in order to reject them all, if I can find in each some reason for doubt. And to that end it will be unnecessary for me to examine each one in particular, which would be an endless labor; but, because the destruction of the foundations necessarily draws with it all the rest of the edifice, I shall first attack the principles on which my old opinions were based.

All that I have hitherto received as true and assured I have learned of the senses or by the senses; but I have sometimes experienced that the senses are deceptive; and it is prudent never to trust ourselves entirely to what has once deceived us.

But perhaps, although the senses sometimes deceive us concerning things that are in a very small measure perceptible and things that are very remote, there are nevertheless many others of which we cannot reasonably doubt, notwithstanding that we have known them through the medium of the senses: for example, that I am here, seated by the fire, in my dressing-gown, with this paper in my hand, and so forth. And how is it that I cannot deny that these hands and this

body are mine, unless I would compare myself to certain madmen whose brains are so confused and darkened by atrabillious vapors, that they constantly affirm that they are kings, when in fact they are very poor; that they are clothed in gold and purple, when in fact they are entirely naked; or who imagine themselves to be pitchers, or to have a glass body? But, what! these are fools, and I should not be less extravagant were I to be guided by their example.

However, I have here to consider that I am a man, and consequently that I am accustomed to sleep, and to represent to myself in my dreams the same things, or sometimes things less probable than these madmen do in their waking hours. How often has it happened to me to dream by night that I was in this place, that I was dressed, that I was near the fire, although I was quite naked in bed! It certainly seems to me at present that it is not with sleeping eyes that I look at this paper; that this head which I shake is not slumbering; that it is with design and deliberate purpose that I extend this hand and that I feel it: what happens in sleep does not seem so clear or distinct as all this. But, in considering this matter carefully, I call to mind that I have often been deceived in my sleep by similar illusions, and, in halting at this thought, I see so manifestly that there are not here any certain marks by which waking can be clearly distinguished from sleep, that I am fairly astonished; and my astonishment is such that I might almost be persuaded that I am asleep.

Let us suppose, then, that we are asleep, and that all these particulars—namely, that we open our eyes, shake our heads, stretch out our hands, and similar things—are but false illusions; and let us think that neither our hands nor our whole body are such as we see them. Yet it is necessary, at least, to avow that the things which are represented to us in sleep are like pictures and paintings, which can be formed only from resemblance to something real and veritable, and that therefore, at least, these general things—namely, eyes, a head, hands, and a whole body—are not imaginary things, but things real and existing. For painters, even when they endeavor with the greatest skill to represent sirens and satyrs by fantastic and extraordinary figures, cannot however give them forms and natures entirely new, but make only a certain

mixture and composition of the members of divers animals; or if, perhaps, their imagination is extravagant enough to invent something so new that nothing has ever been seen resembling it—and that therefore their work represents a thing purely fictitious and absolutely false—the colors, at all events, in which they paint them must be actual.

And, for the same reason, while these general things—namely, a body, eyes, a head, hands, and other such things—may be imaginary, yet we must necessarily allow that there are at least some other things yet more simple and more universal which are true and existing, from the mixture of which, precisely as from that of certain actual colors, all these images of things which reside in our thought, be they true and real, or fictitious and fantastic, are formed.

Of this kind of things is corporeal nature in general and its extension; together with the figure of things extended, their quantity or size, and their number, as also the place where they are, the time which measures their duration, and so forth. Hence we might perhaps not conclude amiss if we say that physics, astronomy, medicine, and all the other sciences which depend on the consideration of compound things, are very doubtful and uncertain; but that arithmetic, geometry, and the other sciences of that nature which treat only of things very simple and general, without much reference to whether they are in nature or not, contain something certain and indubitable: for, whether I wake or sleep, two and three added together always make five, and the square will never have more than four sides; and it does not seem possible that truths so clear and apparent can be suspected of any falsity or uncertainty.

Yet I have long had in my mind a certain opinion that there is a God who can do everything, and by whom I have been made and created what I am. Now, how do I know but that he has ordained that there should be no earth, no heaven, no extended body, no magnitude, no place, and that nevertheless I should have the feeling of all these things, and that all these should not seem to me to exist otherwise than as I see them? And, verily, as I sometimes judge that others are deceived in the things which they think they best know, how do I know but that he has ordained that I should be deceived every time

I make the addition of two and three, or count the sides of a square, or judge of something still more easy, if anything more easy than that can be imagined? But it may be that God has not willed that I should be thus deceived, for he is called supremely good. Yet if it was contrary to his goodness to have so made me that I should always be deceived, it would also seem contrary to his goodness to permit me sometimes to be deceived, and yet I cannot question but that he does permit it. There are, perhaps, persons here who would rather deny the existence of a God so powerful than believe that all other things are uncertain. But let us not oppose them for the present, and let us admit in their favor that all that is said here of a God is a fable: still, in whatever fashion they suppose I attained to the state and being which I possess, whether they attribute it to some destiny or fatality, or refer it to chance, or will have it to be by a continual sequence and connection of things, or, finally, in any other manner; since to fail and be deceived is an imperfection, the less powerful the author is to whom they assign my origin, the more probable will it be that I am so imperfect as always to deceive myself. To which reasons I have certainly nothing to answer; but after all I am constrained to acknowledge that there is nothing in all that I formerly believed to be true of which I cannot in some fashion doubt; and that not through rashness or levity, but for very strong and maturely considered reasons; so that henceforth I must not less carefully guard myself against giving credence thereto than to what is manifestly false, if I wish to find anything certain and assured in the sciences.

But it is not enough to have made these remarks, I must be careful to bear them in mind; for these old and customary opinions still often recur to my mind, the long and familiar intimacy they have had with me giving them a right to occupy my mind against my will and to make themselves almost masters of my belief; and I shall never lose the habit of deferring to them and of having confidence in them so long as I shall consider them such as they really are, namely, in some fashion doubtful, as I shall presently show, and yet very probable, so that we have more reason to believe than to deny them. This is why I think I shall not do amiss, if, deliber-

ately assuming a contrary proposition, *I deceive myself*, and if I feign for some time that all these opinions are false and imaginary; until at last having so balanced my old and my new prejudices that they cannot weigh down my opinion more to one side than to another, my judgment will be henceforth no more mastered by bad habits and turned from the right road which can conduct it to the knowledge of truth. For I am assured that, nevertheless, there is neither danger nor error in this way, and that I cannot to-day too much indulge my distrust, since it is not now a question of acting, but only of meditating and knowing.

I shall suppose, then, not that God, who is very good and the sovereign source of truth, but that a certain evil spirit, not less cunning and deceitful than powerful, has employed all his industry to deceive me; I shall think that sky, air, earth, colors, figures, sounds, and all other external things, are nothing but illusions and idle fancies, of which he makes use to lay snares for my credulity; I shall consider myself as not having hands, or eyes, or flesh, or blood—as not having any senses, but falsely believing myself to have all these things; I shall remain obstinately attached to this thought; and if, by these means, it is not in my power to come to the knowledge of any truth, at least it is in my power to suspend my judgment. For this reason I shall guard carefully against receiving into my belief any falsity, and shall prepare my mind so well against all the wiles of this great deceiver, that, however powerful and cunning he is, he will never be able in any degree to impose upon me.

But this design is painful and laborious, and a kind of idleness draws me insensibly into the train of my ordinary life; and just as a slave, who has been enjoying in his sleep an imaginary liberty, when he begins to suspect that his liberty is but a dream, fears to awake, and conspires with these agreeable illusions in order to be a long time deceived by them, even so do I fall back, insensibly to myself, into my old opinions, and I fear to awake from this slumbering condition lest the laborious watchings which would have to succeed the tranquillity of this repose, in place of bringing me some light and some knowledge in the understanding of the truth, should not be sufficient to clear away all the darkness of the difficulties which have just been stirred.

SECOND MEDITATION.

ON THE NATURE OF THE HUMAN MIND, AND THAT IT IS MORE EASILY KNOWN THAN THE BODY.

My yesterday's meditation has filled my mind with so many doubts that henceforth it is no more in my power to forget them. And, nevertheless, I do not see in what way I can resolve them; and as if I were suddenly thrown into very deep water, I am so surprised that I can neither secure a footing in the bottom, nor swim, in order to keep myself above water. I shall make the effort, however, and again follow the same path which I yesterday entered on when I withdrew from everything concerning which I could imagine the smallest doubt, just as if I knew that it was absolutely false; and I shall still continue in this path until I have encountered something certain, or at least, if I can do nothing else, until I have learned for certain that there is nothing certain in the world. Archimedes, in order to draw the terrestrial globe from its position and to transport it to another place, asked for nothing but for a point which should be firm and immovable; so I should have a right to entertain high hopes if I am happy enough to find only one thing which is certain and indubitable.

I suppose, then, that all the things I see are false; I persuade myself that all that my memory, filled with illusions, represents to me, has never existed; I think that I have no senses; I believe that body, figure, extension, motion, and place, are but fictions of my mind. What, then, can be esteemed real? Perhaps nothing besides this, that there is nothing certain in the world.

But how do I know whether there is not some other thing different from those which I have just judged as uncertain, and of which we cannot have the least doubt? Is there not some God or other power which puts these thoughts into my mind? That is not necessary, for perhaps I am of myself capable of producing them. I then, at least, am something, am I not? But I have already denied that I had any senses or any body: I nevertheless hesitate, for what follows from that? Am I so dependent on the body and the senses that I cannot exist without them? But I am persuaded that there is nothing whatever in the world, no sky, no earth, no minds, no

bodies; have I not, then, persuaded myself that I am not? Far from it; without doubt I am, whether I persuade myself, or if I have merely thought something. But there is a kind of deceiver, very powerful and very cunning, who uses all his industry always to deceive me. There is not, then, any doubt but that I am, if he deceives me; and, deceive me as much as he will, he can never bring it about that I should be nothing so long as I shall think I am something. So that, after much reflection and after having carefully examined all things, we must at last conclude and hold as constant, that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true every time I pronounce it or conceive it in my mind.

But I do not yet know with sufficient clearness what I am, I who am certain that I am; so that henceforth it will be necessary for me to guard carefully against imprudently taking anything else for me, and thus not to be mistaken in this knowledge which I assert to be more certain and more evident than all that I have hitherto had. For this reason I shall now consider anew what I believed to exist before entering into these last thoughts; and from my old opinions I shall cut off all that more or less can be combatted by the reasons which I have just advanced, so that there shall only remain precisely what is entirely certain and indubitable. What, then, did I heretofore believe myself to be? Manifestly, I thought I was a man. But what is a man? Shall I say he is a reasonable animal? Certainly not; for it would be necessary for me afterwards to discover what an animal is and what reasonable is, and thus from a single question I should insensibly fall into an infinity of others more difficult and more complicated; and I would not waste the little time and leisure which remain to me in unravelling such difficulties. But I shall rather stop here and consider the thoughts which heretofore sprung up of themselves in my mind, and which were prompted by my own nature alone when I applied myself to the consideration of my being. I considered myself first as having a face, hands, arms, and all that machine composed of bone and flesh such as we see in a corpse, which machine I designated by the name of body. I considered besides that I fed, that I walked, that I felt, and that I thought, and I referred all these actions to the soul; but I did not stop to consider what this soul was;

or else, if I did stop, I imagined it was something extremely rare and subtile, like a wind, or a flame, or a very thin air, which was insinuated into and spread through my grosser parts. As to the body, I nowise doubted of its nature; but thought I knew it very distinctly, and if I had wished to explain it according to the notions I then had of it, I should have described it thus: By the body, I understand all that can be limited by any form; which can be contained in any place, and fill a space in such sort that every other body shall be excluded from it; which can be felt either by touch, or by sight, or by hearing, or by taste, or by smell; which can be moved in several ways, not in truth of itself, but by something extraneous to it by which it is touched and from which it receives the impulse: for to have the power of self-motion, as also of feeling or thinking, was something I did not at all believe to belong to the nature of the body; on the contrary, I was rather astonished to see that such faculties should meet in any.

But who am I, now that I suppose there is a certain spirit extremely ingenious, and, if I may venture to say so, malicious and cunning, who employs all his power and industry to deceive me? Can I affirm that I have the least of all those things which I have just said pertain to the nature of the body? I stop to consider the matter attentively, I turn all these things over and over in my mind, and I cannot discover any that I can say is in me. There is no need for my stopping to enumerate them. Let us pass, then, to the attributes of the soul, and see whether there be any one of them in me. The first are feeding and walking; but if it be true that I have no body, it is also true that I cannot walk or feed myself. Another is feeling; but one cannot feel without a body;—although, indeed, I have imagined that formerly I felt many things during sleep which I knew on awaking I had not really felt. Another is thinking, and I find here that thought is an attribute which belongs to me: it alone cannot be detached from me. I am, I exist; that is certain: but how long? As long as I think; for perhaps it would even happen, if I should totally cease to think, that I should at the same time entirely cease to be. I am now admitting nothing which is not necessarily true; I am, then, speaking in precise terms, only a thing

which thinks—that is to say, a mind, an understanding, or a reason, terms whose signification was to me formerly unknown. Now, I am a real thing and really existing; but what thing? As I have already said: a thing which thinks. And what more? I will stir up my imagination in order to see whether I am not something more. I am not that assemblage of members which we call the human body; I am not a thin and penetrating air spread through all its members; I am not a wind, a breath, a vapor, or anything at all which I can feign or imagine, since I have supposed that all that was nothing, and since, without changing this supposition, I find that I never fail to be certain that I am something.

But perhaps it is true that these very things which I suppose not to be because they are unknown to me, are not really different from me, whom I do know. I cannot say; I do not now dispute concerning that, I can give my judgment only on things known to me: I know that I exist and I am trying to find what I am, I whom I know to be. Now it is very certain that the knowledge of my being, thus precisely understood, does not depend on things whose existence is yet unknown to me; consequently, it does not depend on any of those which I can by my imagination feign. And even these terms *feign* and *imagine* warn me of my error; for I should really feign if I imagined myself to be something, since to imagine is nothing else than to contemplate the figure or image of a corporeal thing: but I already know for certain that I am, and that, in a word, it may be that all these images, and generally all that pertains to the nature of the body, are but dreams or chimeras. Hence I see clearly that there was as little reason in my saying I will stir up my imagination in order more distinctly to know what I am, as if I said: I am now awake, and I perceive something real and veritable; but, because I do not yet perceive it with sufficient clearness, I shall go to sleep on purpose, that my dreams may represent to me this matter with more truth and clearness. And yet I manifestly know that nothing of all that I can comprehend by means of the imagination pertains to this knowledge which I have of myself, and that it is necessary to recall and turn away one's mind from this mode of conceiving in order that it may know more distinctly its nature.

But what am I then? A thing that thinks. What is a thing that thinks? It is a thing that doubts, that understands, that conceives, that affirms, that denies, that wills, that wills not, that also imagines and feels. Certainly, these are not a few if they all pertain to my nature. But why should not they pertain to it? Am I not that very person who now doubts almost everything, who nevertheless understands and conceives certain things, who asserts and affirms these alone to be true, who denies all others, who wishes and desires to know more, who wishes not to be deceived, who imagines many things, even sometimes in spite of himself, and who also feels many things, as by the mediation of the organs of the body? Is there anything of all that which is not as real as the certitude that I am, and that I exist even though I should always be asleep, and though he who has given me my existence should use all his industry to mislead me? Is there, therefore, any one of these attributes which can be distinguished from my thought, or which can be said to be separate from myself? For it is of itself so evident that it is I who doubt, who understand and desire, that there is no need that I should here add anything by way of explanation. And I have certainly also the power to imagine; for though it might happen (as I have before supposed) that the things which I imagine may not be true, yet this power of imagination does not cease to be really in me, but forms part of my thought. In short, I am the very thing which thinks—that is, which perceives certain things as by the organs of the senses, since in fact I see light, hear sound, feel heat. But it may be said that these appearances are false, and that I am asleep. Be it so: yet, at least, it is certain that it appears to me that I see light, hear sound, and feel heat; that cannot be false, and this is properly what in me is called feeling, which again is precisely thinking. From this I begin to know what I am a little more clearly and distinctly than before.

But notwithstanding it still seems to me, and I cannot divest myself of the belief, that the corporeal things whose images are formed by thinking, which fall under the senses, and which the senses themselves examine, are not more distinctly known than this unknown part of me which does not fall under the imagination; although, in truth, it is very strange to say that

I should know and comprehend more distinctly things whose existence appears to me doubtful, which are unknown to me, and which do not pertain to me, than those of whose truth I am persuaded, which are known to me, and which pertain to my proper nature, and, in one word, than myself. But I see clearly that this is the explanation: my mind is a vagabond who delights to stray, and who cannot yet brook being kept within the just limits of truth. Let us, then, once more loosen the bridle, and giving the mind every manner of liberty, permit it to examine the objects which appear to it outside, in order that, happening hereafter to withdraw it gently and opportunely, and to steadily fix it on the consideration of its being and the things which it finds within it, it may after that be more easily regulated and conducted.

Let us then now consider the things which are commonly esteemed to be the most easily known of all, and which are also believed to be the most distinctly known, namely, the bodies which we touch and which we see: not, indeed, bodies in general, for these general notions are ordinarily a little more confused; but let us consider one in particular. Let us take, for example, this piece of wax: it has just been taken fresh from the hive, it has not yet lost the sweetness of the honey which it contained, it yet retains something of the odor of the flowers from which it was gathered; its color, its shape, its size, are apparent; it is hard, cold, pliable, and if you strike it, it will emit a sound. In a word, all things which can distinctly cause a body to be known are found in it. But while I am speaking it is brought to the fire: what remained in it of flavor is exhaled, the odor evaporates, its color changes, its shape is lost, its size enlarged, it becomes liquid, it is warm, one can scarcely touch it, and although it is struck it no more emits any sound. Does the same wax still remain after this change? We must admit that it does; no one doubts of it or judges otherwise. What is it, then, which we knew in this piece of wax with so much distinctness? It certainly cannot be anything of all that I observed by the mediation of the senses, since all the things which fell under taste, smell, sight, touch, and hearing, are changed, and still the same wax remains. Perhaps it was what I now think, namely, that this wax was not this sweetness of honey, or this agreeable odor

of flowers, or this whiteness, or this shape, or this sound; but only a body which a little before appeared to me sensible under these forms, and which now makes itself felt under others. But what is it, speaking precisely, that I imagine when I conceive it in this way? Let us consider it attentively, and, cutting off all the things which do not pertain to the wax, let us see what remains. There certainly only remains something extended, flexible, and changeable. But what is it to be flexible and changeable? Is it not that I imagine that this wax, being round, is capable of becoming square, and of passing from the square into a triangular shape? Certainly not; it is not that, since I conceive it capable of receiving an infinitude of such changes; and yet I cannot run through this infinitude by my imagination, and consequently this conception that I have of the wax has not its source in the faculty of imagination. What, now, is this extension? Is it not also unknown? for it becomes larger when the wax is melting, larger when it boils, and still larger when the heat increases; and I should not conceive clearly and according to truth what wax is, if I did not think that this wax which we are considering is capable of receiving more varieties in the way of extension than I ever imagined. It is necessary, therefore, to admit that I cannot even comprehend by the imagination what this piece of wax is, and that it is my understanding alone that comprehends it. I say this piece of wax in particular; for as regards wax in general the thing is still more evident. But what is this piece of wax which can be comprehended only by the understanding or the mind? Certainly it is the same object which I see, which I touch, which I imagine, and, in a word, what I have always from the beginning believed it to be. But what is here particularly to be remarked, is that my perception is not a vision, or a touch, or an imagination, and never has been, although it formerly seemed so, but only an examination by the mind. an examination which may be imperfect and confused as it was before, or else clear and distinct as it now is, according as my attention is more or less directed to the things which are in it and of which it is composed.

Yet I cannot express my astonishment when I consider how much weakness and tendency towards being insensibly carried into error there are in my mind. For while without

speaking I consider all this within myself, yet the words make me pause, and I am nearly deceived by the terms of common language; for we say that we see the same wax if it is before us, and not that we judge it to be the same from its having the same color and the same shape: from which I should almost conclude that we know the wax by the sight of the eyes, and not by the sole examination of the mind; if by chance I observed from a window some men passing in the street, I should, so viewing them, at once say that I see men, just as I say that I see the wax; and yet what do I see from this window but some hats and cloaks, which might cover artificial machines moved merely by springs? But I judge that they are men, and thus I comprehend by the sole power of judgment which resides in my mind what I believed I saw with my eyes.

A man who seeks to raise his knowledge above the common ought to be ashamed to draw occasions of doubt from the forms of speech invented by the vulgar: I prefer to go further, and to consider if I conceived with more evidence and perfection what this wax was when I first perceived it and when I believed I knew it by means of the external senses, or at least by common sense, as it is called—that is to say, by the imaginative faculty—than I now conceive it after having carefully examined what it is and in what fashion it can be known. It would certainly be ridiculous to call this in question. For what was there in this first perception that was distinct? what was there which did not appear capable of falling in the same way under the senses of the smallest of animals? But when I distinguish between the wax and its external forms, and when, just as if I had removed from it its dress, I consider it in its entire nakedness, it is certain, although there may yet be some error found in my judgment, that I cannot conceive it in this way without a human mind.

But after all, what shall I say of this mind, that is to say, of myself? for hitherto I have not admitted anything in me but mind. What then? I who appear to conceive with so much clearness and distinctness this piece of wax, do I not know myself, not only with much more verity and certainty, but also with much more distinctness and clearness? for if I judge that the wax is or exists from the fact that I see it, it

certainly follows more evidently that I am, or that I myself exist from the same fact that I see it: for it may turn out that what I see is not really wax; it may also turn out that I have not even eyes to see anything: but it cannot be that when I see, or (I do not distinguish between the two) when I think I see, I who think am not something. In the same way, if I judge that the wax exists from the fact that I touch it, the same thing will again follow, namely, that I am; and if I judge it from the fact that my imagination, or whatever other cause it may be, persuades me of it, I shall always come to the same conclusion. And what I have here remarked of the wax may be applied to all other things which are external to me and which are to be found outside of me. And, moreover, if the notion or perception of the wax seemed to me clearer and more distinct after not only sight or touch, but also many other causes rendered it more manifest to me, with how much more evidence, distinctness and clearness must I admit that I now know myself, since all the reasons which enable me to know and conceive the nature of wax, or whatever other body it may be, prove much better the nature of my mind; and there are to be found, besides, so many other things in the mind itself which can contribute to the elucidation of its nature, that those which depend on the body, as these do, are scarcely worthy of being taken into account!

But at last I have insensibly arrived at my destination; for since there is one thing which is now manifest to me, that bodies themselves are not properly known by the senses or by the faculty of imagination, but by the understanding alone, and that they are not known from the fact that they are seen or touched, but only from the fact that they are understood, or else comprehended by the thought, I see clearly that there is nothing which it is easier for me to know than the nature of my own mind. But because it is difficult to get rid thus readily of an opinion to which one has long been habituated, it will be well for me to stop for a little at this place, in order that by prolonging my meditation I may impress more deeply in my memory this new knowledge.